

Faraway Feeling

Activity Objective

- To increase student awareness of the separation and isolation an astronaut feels on a long assignment

Key Concepts

The people, things, and activities that are a part of your daily life define your cultural comfort zone.

Emotional unrest often occurs when you leave these familiar people, things, and activities.

On long missions, astronauts must deal with difficulties caused by isolation and separation from loved ones.

Background

The feasibility of long space journeys is currently being researched. A one-way trip to Mars, for example, will take at least nine months. One concern about such travel is what happens to astronauts psychologically. How much pressure and tension will they feel when they are separated from their family, friends, and culture? In this activity, students can begin to explore what it would be like to be away from friends and family for an extended period of time.

Instructions

Have students answer and discuss the following questions:

Imagine you are an astronaut chosen for the first trip to Mars. You will be gone for three years and you will live with five other astronauts. With that in mind, answer the following questions.

- What five people will you miss the most?
- What five recreational activities will you miss the most?
- What five places will you miss the most and why? Be specific.
- What five foods will you miss the most and why? Be specific.
- Space aboard the craft is limited and new supplies cannot be sent to you. You have one personal locker that measures about 1 meter x 75 cm x 25 cm (3' x 2' x 10"). Choose items you will put in the locker (consider reading material, music, personal mementos, and photographs). Make sure they fit by drawing them to scale on graph paper.